

OUTCOME
GOAL 3.3 –
SUPPORT
A GREATER
BALANCE
BETWEEN
WORK AND
FAMILY

Overview

With the dramatic shift of women from households to workplaces, the hours American families spend working in paid jobs, and not at home, have increased dramatically. The patterns of women's work lives now more closely resemble those of men's. Women are less likely to drop out of the labor force for significant periods of their lives, and more and more women are responsible, alone or with a spouse, for the economic security of their families.

Between 1969 and 1996, the number of working married women with children increased by 84 percent, while the percentage of single mothers with children increased from 53 percent to 66 percent. For families with working mothers, issues such as child care and job flexibility become paramount as they balance their work and family responsibilities. The Department is committed to increased access to affordable, quality child care and initiatives that improve workers' ability to perform their job responsibilities without sacrificing their commitment to their dependents.

Serving the Public

Within DOL, the Women's Bureau and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) are responsible for the programs associated with balancing work and family. Since its inception, DOL has been working to highlight and address child care needs, starting in the 1930s and 1940s by publishing reports on working women with children and the arrangements they were able to make to care for their children. Since then, DOL has worked to help employers become more responsive to their employees' child care needs, including surveying the concerns of working women and establishing a clearinghouse that offers employers customized assistance on the most appropriate policies for responding to the dependent care needs of employees.

In April 1998, DOL implemented a national Business-to-Business Mentoring Initiative designed to connect employers providing effective child care programs with employers considering child care options for their workers. DOL is also promoting a national initiative that will improve the quality of the child care workforce, enhance a system for training and certifying child care providers, and assist in the development of a voluntary set of nationally recognized skills standards for the child care industry.

DOL Challenges for the Future

Strengthening the availability and quality of child care for working parents will take all levels of government working together with businesses, experts, advocates, child care providers and parents. Only then will parents have peace of mind that their children are getting the care they need to learn and grow into healthy, able, young adults. To make the most positive impact on child care issues, DOL must continue to search for innovative approaches, maximize resources through private and public partnerships, and stay abreast of the best information available about effective child care programs and practices.

PROVIDE SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

Goal 3.3A: By replicating the West Virginia and other successful child care models, increase the number of States with child care apprenticeship programs to 29 and increase the number of child care apprentices by 10 percent (to at least 2,114).

Results: The Department met the target for the number of States with child care apprenticeship programs and exceeded by six percent the goal with respect to the number of registered child care apprentices.

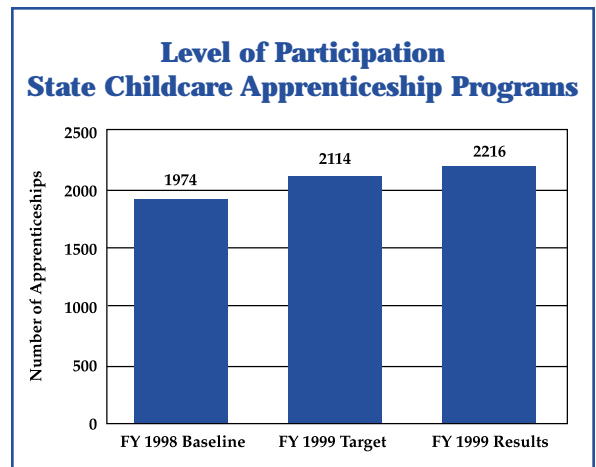
Program Description: The Quality Child Care Initiative addresses the need to provide working families with safe, affordable, quality child care and an adequate supply of competent, professional child care providers. This initiative is part of an upgrading effort currently taking place in the child care industry. The program is designed to: establish a nationwide system of registered apprenticeship training, based on a blending of models and best practices; facilitate the integration of mechanisms for information dissemination contributing to continuous improvement; provide technical assistance to States in the development of their Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship programs; and support a life-long career track for child care workers to be employed at a child care center and/or become child care provider entrepreneurs.

Strategies: In order to successfully meet the goals of the Quality Child Care Initiative, the Department has undertaken numerous strategies, including:

- Engaging national child care organizations and State partners in this initiative;
- Facilitating the development of States' consortia of representatives from the child care industry and government entities;
- Establishing working relationships with the consortia;
- Exchanging the most current information on child care;
- Providing consultative and technical assistance to the States; and
- Initiating cross-cutting workforce development efforts with other Federal entities and national labor organizations.

In addition, ten states – Kansas, Washington, New York, New Hampshire, Iowa, Nevada, Wisconsin, Indiana, Vermont, Colorado – and the District of Columbia were awarded grants totaling \$3.4 million to develop Statewide self-sustainable child care apprenticeship systems.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans: Increasing the number of states with child care programs remains a performance goal for FY 2000. However, in order to more accurately determine the impact of this initiative on the number of apprentices, the indicator for this goal will be revised to the number of newly registered apprentices, rather than the total number of apprentices. ■



SUPPORT A GREATER BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY

Goal 3.3B: Increase by 420 the number of new employers who implement family-friendly policies and programs for their employees.

Results: At the end of FY 1999, approximately 17 percent of the 398

employers enrolled in the Business-to-Business Mentoring Initiative on Child Care were at various stages in implementing family-friendly policies and programs for their workers.

Program Description: At a White House

ceremony on April 23, 1998, President Clinton announced the Department of Labor's "Business-to-Business Mentoring Initiative on Child Care." The public/private partnership was designed to increase the nation's supply of quality, affordable, and accessible child care.

The initiative encourages businesses with established child care and work/family programs to serve as "mentors" to other businesses seeking guidance and direction in establishing similar programs. Through the initiative, DOL also promotes awareness among industry leaders that affordable and safe child care is a top concern for families.

Analysis of Results: There are four phases to the initiative: 1) pre-

implementation; 2) employer enrollment; 3) matching of employers with business mentors; and 4) effective implementation by employers of their child care policies and programs.

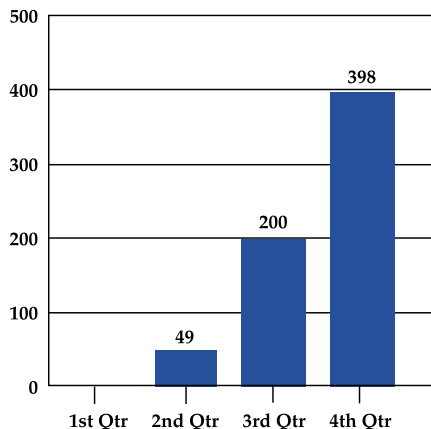
At the end of FY 1999, the Women's Bureau (WB) had just begun Phase three. Phase two required extensive outreach and publicity through regional and national media to attract the attention and participation of the business community and took longer than planned. As a result, Phase three – the process of effectively matching employers who enrolled as mentors and mentees – fell behind schedule. At the end of FY 1999, approximately 17 percent of the 398 employers were working toward implementation of work and family initiatives for their workers. Thus, the projected target of 420 employers implementing policies and programs for their workers by the end of FY 1999 was not reached.

Strategies: Successes during Phase one included the installation of a Business-to-Business Mentoring Initiative on Child Care website, an electronic database with sign-up capability and the distribution of an enrollment brochure to over 2,000 employers. Also, through the dissemination of the Department's new Work-Family Employer Exchange periodical, as well as numerous events and partnerships throughout the nation, the Women's Bureau was able to enroll 398 employers with a total workforce of more than one-half million employees into the program.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans: For FY 2000, the Women's Bureau's goal was revised to require 20 percent of enrolled employers to fully

Business-to-Business Mentoring on Child Care

Number of Employers Enrolled



implement their family-friendly policies and programs by the end of FY 2000. In preparation for Phase four, WB is distributing employer assessment forms to identify employers who have implemented a child care policy or program.

The critical task of matching employers with appropriate business mentors will also continue to ensure that the Bureau attains its FY 2000 goal. Only by making effective matches can the Women's Bureau contribute to the expansion of quality child care and work/family policies and programs. ■